

October 10,2019

Stoneham Tree Committee Meeting,

Stoneham Town Hall, 35 Central Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room

Attendees - Jim Previte, Sue Keeler, Paul Mazzotta, Dennis Sheehan, David Goodberg, Nhai Cao, Jeanne Grieve, Ellen McBride, Connie Filosi

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda Item 1: Approve Minutes. Motion to approve minutes of September 26th meeting seconded and voted unanimously.

Agenda Item 2: Assign Members' Terms. After a discussion of the terms of members, it was recommended to the Town Administrator that the Committee Chair have a one year term, all residents members have two year terms and Open Space Committee member and Conservation Committee member have three year terms. After that, everybody has a three year term. Term ends on June 30 and restarts on July 1. Motion made, seconded and voted unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: Future meeting dates proposed for November 7, 2019, December 5, 2019, January 2, 2020, February 6, 2020, March 5, 2020, April 2, 2020, May 7, 2020, and June 4, 2020. The 2nd Floor conference room has been reserved for these dates. Motion made and seconded and voted unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Requests for items on agendas: Sue requested that items submitted for future agendas be sent to Sue by Monday morning before the Thursday meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Process currently followed. Sue handed out three documents: "Town of Stoneham Tree Policy", Select Board "Policy for the Installation of Memorial Plaques, Benches, and Trees in the Town of Stoneham", and Mass DCR "Massachusetts Urban & Community forestry Program Tree Boards & Committees". A brief discussion ensued of the Select Board's Tree and Bench Policy. This topic will be an agenda item for next meeting. An idea was put forward to create a wooden tree with leaves holding information about locations for donations of trees and benches for public information access. Sue requested that members bring lists of suggested areas and locations for public trees to be planted. Committee will also have lists of types of trees to plant. A discussion followed about the process for requesting a public tree to be cut down. Jim stated that there are Tree Hearings in Spring and Fall to which a written request must be submitted for discussion at hearing. If one person, not limited to Stoneham residents, objects, request will be denied, but can be appealed to the Board of Selectmen and also posted publicly as well as on the tree in question. A person requesting a public tree to be cut down must pay for the removal and replacement cost, determined by Town. A further discussion regarding appropriate penalty for illegally removing public tree. A legal opinion is required. Tree Committee goal is to determine and publicly post the process and policy for removing a public tree. Paul emphasized that

safety of public is important in consideration of whether a public tree is healthy or should be trimmed or removed. Sue asked Jim to document the process for how a tree removal request is handled now and bring it to the Tree Committee. Connie suggested the Tree Committee create a list of ideal goals, then prioritize the list and assess the cost. She also suggested finding out what other towns do.

Agenda Item 6: Goals and priorities. Sue pointed out that By-laws have some requirements. Sue displayed a previous tree survey of town trees cut vs town trees planted. She suggested a grant would be needed to do a current survey. It was also discussed that manuals and guidance of planting and caring for trees for public knowledge are a goal. The Public Shade Tree Act provides protection for public trees under the law. It was also discussed that a goal of the Tree Committee is to write and update a Community Forestry Tree Plan and also include a few pages in the Annual Report summarizing actions on trees. Dave volunteered to collect new ideas for discussion. He asked that they be emailed to him the Friday before the Tree Committee Meeting. He also offered to develop a framework for the Tree Committee website. He will create some samples to share with the Committee. Sue pointed out that anything about the Tree Committee on Patch must be agreed to by the Committee first. Connie and Jeanne offered to create a list of how trees benefit the Town. They will draft a short statement introducing the Tree Committee purpose, meeting and general goals.

Sue reviewed items from the Ideas Submitted for Discussion list. Jim will ask colleagues how tree survey got done. Ellen will ask colleague how they get their trees. A short term goal was suggested of improving the Town tree planting ratio. A long term goal was suggested of planting more trees that cut down every year. Another goal is to establish a list of locations where trees can be planted on public spots. Another goal is to incentivize private planting through education and encouragement. It was suggested that the Tree Committee could hold an event at the Library in January to present the benefit of planting trees and provide information on how and when to plant and maintain them. Another goal is to audit public tree pits and determine, if they are empty, to remove the stump or move the location. Also to look for sponsors for this work. Dennis told the Committee that a 501C3 must be set up to set up a Tree Fund; the laws are finicky. A goal was suggested to work with other Town Committees to encourage communication and coordination.

Agenda Item 7: Budgetary issues. It was suggested that a Grants Subcommittee with Jim and Connie work will investigate and identify grant sources. A Grant Writing Subcommittee of Sue and Connie will collaborate on writing grants. Sue introduced the Stockwell Fund, which is an old town fund for resident healthcare assistance. There is something in the Fund regarding trees. Maria and Dava will be queried for further information. Utilities are supposed to reimburse the Town if utility work damages trees. Jim said the MWRA owes the Town for tree work. There is a mitigation fund; he will investigate reclaiming funds. Dave suggested that MassSave may have a tree policy. If any member has other ideas, please submit them to Dave or Sue. Sue will write a letter to the Town Administrator to request include consideration of tree planting in the Town Budget. There was discussion of a previous line item in the Budget for trees. Jim will look at old Town Meeting books for that account number.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

